

PURPOSE: TO PROVIDE
INFORMATION TO ALL
DMH EMPLOYEES.

**MISSION OF
DMH.**

Prevention,
Treatment, and
Promotion of Public
Understanding for
Missourians with
mental illnesses,
developmental
disabilities, and
addictions.

**VISION OF
DMH:**

Hope * Opportunity

Community

Inclusion

Missourians receiv-
ing mental health
services will have
the opportunity to
pursue their
dreams and live
their lives as valued
members of their
communities.

**INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:**

Book Named 2
Chair of
Problem
Gambling
Coalition

Director's 2
Creativity
Showcase 2010

Dates to 2
Remember

DMH Monthly

ISSUE 24

NOVEMBER 2009



Director's Corner

The following article was written by Emmy, Golden Globe and Tony Award winning actress Glenn Close. It is from her posting on October 21st on The Huffington Post, The Internet Newspaper: News Blogs and Video Community.

Mental Illness: The Stigma of Silence

Mental illness and I are no strangers.

From Alex Forrest in *Fatal Attraction* to Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* to Norma Desmond in Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Sunset Boulevard*, I've had the challenge -- and the privilege -- of playing characters who have deep psychological wounds. Some people think that Alex is a borderline personality. I think Blanche suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and everyone knows that Norma is delusional.

I also have the challenge of confronting the far less entertaining reality of mental illness in my own family. As I've written and spoken about before, my sister suffers from a bipolar disorder and my nephew from schizoaffective disorder. There has, in fact, been a lot of depression and alcoholism in my family and, traditionally, no one ever spoke about it. It just wasn't done. The stigma is toxic. And, like millions of others who live with mental illness in their families, I've seen what they endure: the struggle of just getting through the day, and the hurt caused every time someone casually describes someone as "crazy," "nuts," or "psycho".

Even as the medicine and therapy for mental health disorders have made remarkable progress, the ancient social stigma of psychological illness remains largely intact. Families are loath to talk about it and, in movies and the media, stereotypes about the mentally ill still reign.

Continued on page 3

St. Charles Wellness Fair and Blood Drive

St. Charles Habilitation Center had its first annual Wellness Fair and Blood Drive sponsored by the American Red Cross October 16, 2009. It was an amazing event that included consumers and staff from around the St. Louis Metropolitan area. Stanley Woronick, Extension Associate and Lisa Britt, Health Educator were the guest speakers for the event. There were 23 productive units of blood collected, which has a potential of saving 87 lives.

We have other fantastic events in the works to include: "Living well at 40 and beyond" talking about mammograms for women 40 and up sponsored by St. Luke's Hospital. "Prostate Cancer Awareness Week" and "The Walk for Cancer" hosted by Ladonna Weaver and sponsored by the Komen Breast Foundation. Please look for these events in the Spring and Summer of 2010.

On behalf of Chad Rollins, Superintendant, Mary Watts, Unit Manager, Marilyn Aleem, Chairperson, and the STCHC Wellness Committee, we would like to thank everyone for your support and wish you a fantastic Holiday Season and a Happy and "Well" New Year!



St. Charles Habilitation Center Staff



DIRECTOR'S CREATIVITY SHOWCASE 2010

The Missouri Mental Health Foundation and the Department of Mental Health are sponsoring the 2010 Director's Creativity Showcase. The event showcases the talents and abilities of people with mental health issues.

The deadline for submission of materials is Friday, January 29, 2010.

For more information go to:

<http://www.dmh.mo.gov/news/DirectorsShowcase.htm>

or call Debra Walker at (573) 751-1647
OR e-mail debra.walker@dmh.mo.gov.

Bock Named Chair of

Statewide Problem Gambling Coalition

Nora Bock, clinical director for the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse at the Missouri Department of Mental Health, was recently named the chairperson of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem Gambling. Bock assumed the year-long leadership role in September.

"The Alliance has been at the forefront of addressing problem gambling in Missouri for more than 10 years," she said. "The achievements of this group have only been possible because of the commitment of the membership. I am proud to represent the Alliance in this capacity."

Bock said she is looking forward to furthering the Alliance's mission to educate Missouri resi-

dents about the warning signs of problem gambling and where to find help.

"We're very excited about the year ahead," said Bock. "We recently updated our youth addiction prevention program, which includes a 30-minute DVD, facilitator's guide and poster, and we began distributing the new program to Missouri schools over the summer. We're also hard at work planning the seventh annual Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse. This well-recognized and respected regional conference represents strong collaboration at the national level, consistent with the cooperative efforts of the Missouri Alliance to Curb Problem



Nora Bock

Gambling on the state level. We have accomplished much in raising awareness about problem gambling, but there is still work to be done."

To learn more about the Alliance, the new youth prevention program or the Midwest Conference on Problem Gambling and Substance Abuse, visit 888betsoff.org.



Dates to REMEMBER

November...American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month

November 11...Veterans Day

November 17...Signs of Suicide (SOS) Training, Kansas City, Missouri

November 19...Signs of Suicide (SOS) Training, St. Louis, Missouri

November 21...National Survivor of Suicide Day

Mental Illness: The Stigma of Silence (continued from page 1)

Whether it is Norman Bates in *Psycho*, Jack Torrance in *The Shining*, or Kathy Bates' portrayal of Annie Wilkes in *Misery*, scriptwriters invariably tell us that the mentally ill are dangerous threats who must be contained, if not destroyed. It makes for thrilling entertainment.

There are some notable exceptions, of course -- Dustin Hoffman in *Rainman*, or Russell Crowe's portrayal of John Nash in *A Beautiful Mind*. But more often than not, the movie or TV version of someone suffering from a mental disorder is a sociopath who must be stopped.

Alex Forrest is considered by most people to be evil incarnate. People still come up to me saying how much she terrified them. Yet in my research into her behavior, I only ended up empathizing with her. She was a human being in great psychological pain who definitely needed meds. I consulted with several psychiatrists to better understand the "whys" of what she did and learned that she was far more dangerous to herself than to others.

The original ending of *Fatal Attraction* actually had Alex commit suicide. But that didn't "test" well. Alex had terrified the audiences and they wanted her punished for it. A tortured and self-destructive Alex was too upsetting. She had to be blown away.

So, we went back and shot the now famous bathroom scene. A knife was put into Alex's hand, making her a dangerous psychopath. When the wife shot her in self-defense, the audience was given catharsis through bloodshed -- Alex's blood. And everyone felt safe again.

The ending worked. It was thrilling and the movie was a big hit. But it sent a misleading message about the reality of mental illness.

It is an odd paradox that a society, which can now speak openly and unabashedly about topics that were once unspeakable, still remains largely silent when it comes to mental illness. This month, for example, NFL players are rumbling onto the field in pink cleats and sweatbands to raise awareness about breast cancer. On December 1st, World AIDS Day will engage political and health care leaders from every part of the globe. Illnesses that were once discussed only in hushed tones are now part of healthy conversation and activism.

Yet when it comes to bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress, schizophrenia or depression, an uncharacteristic coyness takes over. We often say nothing. The mentally ill frighten and embarrass us. And so we marginalize the people who most need our acceptance.

What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, more unashamed conversation about illnesses that affect not only individuals, but their families as well. Our society ought to understand that many people with mental illness, given the right treatment, can be full participants in our society. Anyone who doubts it ought to [listen to Kay Redfield Jamison](#), a psychiatry professor at Johns Hopkins, vividly describe her own battles with bipolar disorder.

Over the last year, I have worked with some visionary groups to start BringChange2Mind.org, an organization that strives to inspire people to start talking openly about mental illness, to break through the silence and fear. We have the support of every major, American mental health organization and numerous others.

I have no illusions that [BringChange2Mind.org](#) is a cure for mental illness. Yet I am sure it will help us along the road to understanding and constructive dialogue. It will help deconstruct and eliminate stigma.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that by the year 2020 mental illness will be the second leading cause of death and disability. Every society will have to confront the issue. The question is, will we face it with open honesty or silence?

Read more at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/glenn-close/mental-illness-the-stigma_b_328591.html&cp

